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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/731,986	12/11/2003	David Hawley	21100.0094(7159-410)	5867

7590 07/13/2004

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EXAMINER

PASCHALL, MARK H

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3742

DATE MAILED: 07/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/731,986

Applicant(s)

HAWLEY, DAVID

Examiner

Mark H Paschall

Art Unit

3742

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 7-11, 15-19, 23-26 and 31-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6, 11-14, 20-22 and 27-30 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: ____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3,7-11,15-19,2-26,31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muehlberger et al 835' in view of Anderson et al 650'. Muehlberger et al teach the claimed plasma torch including multiple cathodes arranged around a common anodes in figure 3. Note that the anode 105 in figure 3 depicts region 148 which has a sharp protruding ridge directed radially inward and such ridge would conventionally attract the arc as an arc attachment area. The patent to Anderson et al more clearly teaches that an arc attachment region should comprise a sleeve of higher melting material such as tungsten (sleeve 34 in figure 3a) to hinder arc erosion. This sleeve comprises a predefined arc attachment area and provides less wear on the anode as a benefit. In view of this teaching it would have been obvious to modify the Muehlberger et al system to use predefined arc attachment areas for the anode area adjacent the cathode areas to provide the benefit of less erosion to the arc attachment zone. This modification could comprise a region of tungsten around the inside diameter of the anode in the region of area 142. As per claim 3 note that area 142 is elevated as claimed. As per claim 8 note Anderson et al sets forth tungsten, as claimed. As per claim 10 , copper is a conventional electrode material in plasma torch systems. As per

claim 15 Muehlberger et al teach cooling channels in the anode and they obviously cool the attachment region slower since this region protrudes further away from the channels than the other anode regions.

Claims 4,5,6,11-14,20-22,27-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Use of a ridge as the attachment area and shaping the bore as a plurality of overlapping generally circular bodies, as set forth in the above claims, are features not taught in the prior art of record. Also use of axially elongated regions as per claim 11 is not taught by the prior art.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Crawmer, Delcea and Butler are cited for disclosing pertinent plasma devices.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark H Paschall whose telephone number is 703 308-1642. The examiner can normally be reached on 7am - 3pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ehud Gartenberg can be reached on 703 308-2634. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Mark H Paschall
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3742



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